

Testimony of Y-Khim Nie  
Montagnard Refugee in North Carolina

Committee on International Relations  
Hearing on Religious Persecution, Human Rights violation and Family  
Reunification June 20, 2005

The Honorable Chris Smith  
Chairman Subcommittee on Foreign Relations Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Y-Khim Nie, I am a Montagnard refugee. I fled into Cambodia in 2001 for safety and escaped because of the crackdown against our Montagnard people. I came to North Carolina on April 21, 2001, I represent all the Montagnards living in North Carolina who are trying to get their families out of Vietnam.

First of all I would like to thank Congressman Smith very much for the opportunity to share the situation of our Montagnard families in Vietnam. I want to thank the members of the Human Rights Subcommittee for their interest and full consideration of the human rights violations and religious persecution in Vietnam and especially to the Montagnard people in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

We need help from the United States government immediately. The Vietnamese authorities have refused to issue passports for many of our Montagnard families.

On Feb. 2003, I filled out Form I-730 to sponsor my family in Vietnam.

On August 2003, I received the approval notice from INS in the US and the US Consulate in Vietnam. The local Vietnamese officials in Buon Ma Thuot called my wife H?Mri Buon Krong to get their passports. She and her children went to the local office asking for their passport but the Vietnamese officers refused. She kept asking and the police officers did not give any reasons.

On October 13, 2003, the local police arrested my wife H?Mri Buon Krong and put her in jail because they suspected her hiding her uncle, who the police were looking for. The other reason is that the police were angry because I participated in the demonstration in 2001. After they arrested my wife, the police also arrested her uncle named Y-Hoang Buon Krong.

The police shot him, broke his leg, and put him in a big bag, beat him like animal and then sentenced him to 10 years in prison in Hanoi.

The police released my wife H?Mri on October 23, 2003 after 10 days in jail. Even though they released her but my family is shadowed by the police every day. My wife cannot freely go to the farm, to market, even go to visit our neighborhood without permission by the police.

On March 24, 2004, my wife received a letter from David Rockey at the US Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City to introduce my wife to go to the Exit Permit office in Daklak city to get her passport again.

On April 8, 2004, my wife went to the local Exit Permit office to ask for the passport; however, the police said, "We cannot issue the passport to you because your husband is against our government and illegally crossed the Cambodia border to become a refugee in the United States." Another reason is because the situation in Daklak area was not stable. The police also promised many times, tomorrow, next month?... My wife went back and forth many times; finally, she got nothing.

On December 19, 2004, the police arrested my wife again and jailed her 5 days in Buon Don District because I had called her from the U.S. and asked her about her passport. The police warned my wife not to call me and to not say anything about the passport.

On March 3, 2005, my wife, my father and my brother went to the Exit Permit office of Daklak province to ask for her passport, but the police officer said "we are busy now, please come back on March 9, 2005, we will help you."

On March 9, 2005, my wife, father and brother went back to they office as they promised. Again they said; "we are waiting order from our government" and you have to wait for awhile and then come back."

On March 14, 2005, because my wife felt so tired, she cannot go back again. My father and my brother went back to the office; the police officer said "why did you come to our office every day, we have told you that we are not ready yet. You have to wait and keep waiting." Their faces were very angry.

On June 5, 2005, the police told my wife and all families who have husbands in the US that "First, if your husband sponsored your family, you have to show us all your husband's documents. Second, you cannot meet and say anything to any foreigners who come to your village unless we first allow you to talk."

Mr. Chairman, we came here today to tell you the truth about the Montagnard family situation and how the Vietnamese government treated the Montagnard people. We are treated like enemies in our homeland. We pay a high price for a life of survival, a life with no freedom. We pray that the Hanoi government will someday have compassion and hear our voice of suffering.

Why can't we have rights to live as human beings? Why we cannot worship our Christian faith freely? Why cannot we receive humanitarian aid? Why can't we have the same opportunities in education and development as Vietnamese people can? Why cannot we get our family out of Vietnam?

The Montagnard are severely punished not for violating the law, but for being indigenous people, persecuted for their Christian faith and political views.

I ask the U.S. government to bring my Montagnard family to U.S. I know that the Hanoi government is intentionally blocking all Montagnard wives and children from leaving Vietnam. I am sure that they have planned how to create a difficult situation for the Montagnard family, especially in DakLak province.

The Hanoi regime and the local government hate Montagnards. Human Rights abuses are never-ending. It has been this way throughout Montagnard history.

We are asking the United States government to put pressure on the Vietnamese government. We want them to stop threatening and harming our families.

We know for sure that the Hanoi government will never allow our family to leave, unless there is pressure from the United States government.

We sincerely hope that you will hear our true voice. The United States is our hope for our families and our people in the Central Highlands. I am here today to ask the United States government to help our family leave Vietnam as soon as possible. The longer they stay in Vietnam, the greater the danger they will face.

Thank you for the privilege of my presentation today. God bless you and bless America.

Y-Khim Nie